

**Budget Hearing/Workshop of the Pawtucket School Committee
Regular Meeting of the Pawtucket School Committee Immediately
Following**

Tuesday, April 10, 2012, 6:00 PM

**Jenks/JMW Complex for the Performing and Visual Arts Media Center
350 Division Street, Pawtucket, RI 02860**

Budget Hearing Minutes

I Meeting will come to order

The Chairman called the budget workshop to order at 6:05 PM.

a. Roll call

Mr. Araujo-here; Ms. Bonollo-here; Mr. Coughlin-here; Mr. Noonan-here; Mr. Spooner-here; Mr. Tenreiro-here

Also in attendance were Mrs. Deborah Cylke, Superintendent of Schools; Mr. Thomas Conlon, Business Administrator and Ms. Margaret Baker, Assistant Business Administrator

b. Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by the Chairman, Mr. Tenreiro.

II Public Participation

Mr. Joseph Knight: I have one question on the budget and that is I see an item here for revenue for \$996,000 for Maintenance of Effort. Isn't that in the Governor's budget to be reduced to the cities as a mandate so that they don't have to come up with that? Isn't that part of the law that they don't have to come up with that—the act that was introduced to the legislature?

Mr. Tenreiro: We'll be addressing that in the summary that comes at the beginning of the budget hearing.

Mr. Knight: That was definitely introduced on behalf of the Governor.

Mr. Tenreiro: Thank you.

III FY13 Public Hearing Workshop

a. Public Input

None

b. School Committee Budget Workshop

Mrs. Cylke: The atmosphere is different this evening than last year when there was a \$7.8M deficit and we were bringing before you significant cuts which impacted the district across the board and all employee groups. I'm going to ask our Business Administrator, Mr. Conlon and our Assistant Business Administrator, Ms. Baker to take you through your budget notebooks and section I, projected revenues, anticipated expenditures and additional expenses.

Ms. Nordquist arrived at 6:10 PM.

Ms. Baker: Section I is the first page of your notebooks and we are going to start with a synopsis of the FY13 revenue and the decreases of FY12 revenue.

\$2.8 M Restoration of Federal Jobs Funds

\$1.2 M Accelerated Funding Formula (We'll come back to this line)

\$2.6M Funding Formula, Year 2

\$996,500 Maintenance of Effort

\$ 87,717 Decrease in anticipated Medicaid Revenue

\$ 51,431 Decrease in anticipated tuitions

Together that adds up to \$6.3M added revenue for FY13 over FY12 revenue.

Mr. Coughlin: Where is the questionable funding?

Ms. Baker: The questionable funding is the accelerated funding formula.

On that accelerated funding formula, we all know that is based on 2% increase in the meals tax. We know that it is not really a popular proposition at this point. We've eliminated that increase in revenue. The flip side to that is the funding formula may survive even if the meals tax does not go through. There are other avenues they are exploring to fund this. In May when the Department of Revenue meets, they are going to do some projections on the May revenues. However, we may not know until June. We don't think it is prudent to put it in as revenue because it is not anticipated as going through at this point.

In reference to Mr. Knight's question and the maintenance of effort, you can see the \$996,500 component is. It is three years of deficit reduction plan payments and that \$996,500 and that is in our proposed budget.

Mrs. Cylke: Regarding maintenance of effort last Thursday, we were requested to meet with the Mayor, Tony Pires, Chairman Tenreiro, myself and Tom and Ms. Baker and they wanted to talk about Maintenance of Effort that they had proposed in their budget. We were aware that they were going to ask the Auditor General, Dennis Hoyle, to reduce the maintenance of effort payment and pay only \$150,000 this year and next year. When they have a budget deficit reduction plan, they only have a five year window. Our response was we don't like it, but we understand because they are trying to work down the City of Pawtucket's deficit. In other words they would

reduce that \$996,500 by \$278,000. We plan on making an adjustment once we have final word.

It was also shared with us that there is proposed legislation again about cities and municipalities to reduce their appropriations to municipalities by 5%. This would be devastating. This would be a \$1.4M reduction in revenue. I think we need to very aggressively oppose that.

Last year we had a \$7.8M deficit. This year just because revenues are greater than they were last year doesn't mean we are back to even the starting point. At our last meeting, Mr. Conlon shared it looked like we would have an additional \$3.4M, but no we haven't even dug our way half way out of the hole. If this legislation is approved they are going to consider cutting our appropriation by 5%, but that is speculative at this point. But I think we can expect the maintenance of effort being reduced next year to a payment of only \$150,000 instead of a payment of \$278,000.

Mr. Tenreiro: It does say it in writing, but it is a reduction of just the FY10 figure down to \$150,000.

Mr. Conlon: Correct. The \$428,000 for FY10 would be reduced to \$150,000. That means the entire \$996,500 would be reduced to \$718,000.

Mr. Tenreiro: That money actually comes back to us in future years, correct?

Mr. Conlon: It does. A deficit reduction plan pays down deficits from prior years. The year after that payment is made, it becomes maintenance of effort. The \$150,000 payment that would be made this

year towards the FY10 deficit is made, but we can't use it for operations because it goes toward paying down a prior year's debt. However, next year an additional \$150,000 is appropriated and we can use it for operations.

Mr. Tenreiro: So to a degree, that \$278,000 is really an agreement with the School Department assisting the municipal side to handle their deficit situation that they are currently in.

Mr. Conlon: The city budgeted \$428,000 this year to pay for the deficit which is why we counted on \$428,000 next year. But if the statute reduces it to \$150,000, then we can only count on \$150,000 next year.

Mr. Araujo: Regarding the reduction appropriation by 5%, is that a one year thing or a permanent reduction?

Ms. Baker: We don't know.

Mrs. Cylke: In a document handed out to you this evening, on line 10 it reads, "each community shall not contribute an amount not less than 95% ." So that is legislation that would allow a 5% cut.

Mr. Conlon: There are two proposals regarding the maintenance of effort. The first is the 5% and the second is where Mr. Knight is correct that the Governor included in his budget proposal.

Ms. Baker: What that means is that \$718,000 would disappear if that legislation is passed. That would reduce our revenues by that amount.

Mr. Coughlin: At the last meeting we identified \$2.7M that the city owes us from the past. Mr. Noonan had suggested that a letter go out. Are we budgeting any of this recapturing any of that \$2.7M?

Mr. Conlon: No. Not for next year.

Mr. Tenreiro: There was a 5% reduction and another \$1.5M and then there was the enrollment and when you speak to this fact every year and it has never been restored, we will speak to the committee. That's the entire context behind all of this. We talk about transformation and moving forward and these two things here, although speculative, could reduce our school budget by \$3.5M. The municipal debt would really be paid on the backs of the students of the City of Pawtucket.

Mr. Coughlin: You're talking about the \$1.6M. At what point and time will that not be recoverable for whatever reasons—statute of limitations or it just won't be practicable to ask for it?

Mr. Conlon: I think that's a legal question. I don't have an answer for that.

Mr. Tenreiro: In regards to the letter, we were waiting to have this meeting. Besides the \$1.6M we need to address the impact that these issues will have in the same letter.

Mr. Conlon: The 5% is a limited by night reduction. If the second part of it goes, whereby they no longer count the deficit payment plan as maintenance of effort, that is forever. Whereas if the Governor's plan goes through, the \$150,000 payment that is being made this year. We won't get it next year, or the year after, or the year after and so on.

Mr. Tenreiro: We need to advocate very politically at the state house in opposition to some of these bills that are out there.

Mr. Conlon: As we did several months ago, we broke it down in several categories:

The first being contractual increases. These are expenditures in which we have no control. Some of the bigger increases include:

\$625,000 Step Increases

\$304,000 Reverse furlough day taken last year by administrators and teachers

\$327,000 Health benefit increase, also increase in co-pays \$88,000 and \$53,000 (retirees)

\$574,000 Pension decrease, if it hadn't been for pension reform that would have been a \$3M increase.

\$167,000 Pension increase for the non-certified

The pension reform actually saved the Pawtucket School Department \$3.5M even though the pension for the non-certified went up. It was a huge benefit to the district in terms of overall savings.

Between the active people and retirees it's \$1.4M in total contractual increases based on current contracts.

You will notice there are no salary increases in here in any category.

Next we have other increases and (decreases) required by prudent budgeting practices. While they might not necessarily be required by contract, you do in fact have to budget for them.

\$357,000 Charter school tuitions, there was a significant increase in Mayoral Academy student population. It costs \$2,500 per student per year and we get an estimated number from RIDE.

Mr. Noonan: Do we get the numbers from RIDE?

Mr. Conlon: RIDE provides us with an estimated enrollment number.

\$344,000 State school tuitions, for the first time because of the funding formula we have to pay tuition to Davies. It's a 5 year phase

in period. Five years from now the amount we pay for Davies students will be the same as we pay for charter students. Right now it's only 20%.

Mrs. Cylke: We have approximately 400 Pawtucket students attending Davies so that's \$1M . Part of the funding formula says if that kid leaves then the funding leaves with that kid too. It's something we need to be prepared for.

Mr. Conlon: Last year the literacy set aside was a separate restricted fund that had been around for a while and there were only certain things we could spend the money on part of which was paying for half of the Deputy Superintendent's salary and half her secretary's salary amongst a whole bunch of other things. That fund disappeared and it is now rolled up into the funding formula. It's not a restricted separate fund anymore. It doesn't exist as a separate fund to which we can charge anything at all. So those salaries that were previously or some of those salaries that were previously charged to literacy set aside last year, now have to be picked up locally.

Mr. Noonan: Did we reach an agreement with East Providence on how much we were going to charge for Jackie Walsh?

Mr. Conlon: Once they became a certified technical CPE program, I billed them all their per pupil rate. Some districts are giving us a little pushback and others have sent the check.

Mr. Coughlin: Why do you have legal fees bumped up by 3%?

Mr. Conlon: The fact is all of these—class size, custodial, building repairs all of them are based on where we projected to end this year.

There is no specific reason on the legal fees. One year may be high the next year may be low so we pick an average. Summer school is now credit recovery. We laid off quite a few people last year so we are expecting our unemployment expense to go down. There is no more accreditation expense. There is \$21,000 in other line items.

Next year we will get \$6.3M more than we had this year. That is with the Governor's proposed budget.

The expenditures total \$2.9M and that gives us that \$3.4M halfway mark as I call it.

Mrs. Cylke: I think it's fair to say that \$2.1M is reduced by \$278,000 even though it's not official that maintenance of effort being only \$150,000.

Mr. Conlon: We're at the \$3.4M and as you know relying on unidentified cuts and medical reserves is an iffy situation and not a very desirable one. So for next year's budget we have eliminated any reliance on the medical reserve, that number is at zero and the unidentified cuts go from \$1.6M to almost half. Unidentified cuts are chiefly, but not solely unpaid leaves. That's where a lot of the money comes from. What we did keep in is the teacher breakage and that is the normal retirements of the teachers and the replacements of what is usually a lower step teacher with a single health plan.

Mr. Tenreiro: I hope that's something that the committee would be committed to. Reducing the reliance on the unidentified cuts because in three years I'd like to bring that number to zero and increase our reserve and furthermore a contingency account of some sort. Those should be goals we set for ourselves fiscally.

Mrs. Cylke: I think a one percent reserve is prudent. I think we all agree that relying on unidentified cuts and medical reserves is just not good business practice.

Mr. Conlon: When all is said and done the bottom line here is showing a \$2.1M surviving excess of revenue over expenditures. We've got more money so far than we need after we backed out the contractual responsibilities and the roll up costs.

Mrs. Cylke: What is the definition of a surplus? It is money left over after you have after you have counted for everything you need. We're not even close to that. I think for the general public a surplus means you have money to spend on whatever you want and I just wanted to share my definition.

Mr. Conlon: It's a midway point at which we deducted the contractual expenditures and those that are required by prudent budgeting practices.

Mrs. Cylke: Next we have additions to budget. It's almost to me restoration to budget and what I would consider essentials.

Mr. Noonan: You said you definition of a surplus is you have enough money for what you need. Do we have enough money for what we need?

Mrs. Cylke: No we do not.

Mr. Coughlin: Some of the transformation costs, is all of the transformation costs accounted for in this FY13 budget?

Mrs. Cylke: The transformation protocol required us to repurpose general funds and federal funds to address transformation plans. You had to come up a plan that met criteria, but they were saying

don't rely on the grant to meet all of your needs. We submitted to RIDE and once it is approved, we—Tom, Maggie, me, Kim, Chris Spagnoli and Patti Di Censo met and determined how much we had to take out of the federal budget and how much we had to take out of the local budget and this is how much we will take out of the Race to the Top budget and this is how much we hope you give us. They have been very clear that we are to get this done whether they give us the grant money or not. But we have made commitments as we had to and submitted to RIDE. For example we have \$101,000 for technology upgrades at the high schools. The technology we are planning or is more like \$250,000. So we are counting on the grant to provide us with \$130,000 and the general budget will have \$101,000. The Secondary School Performance Officer is now the Transformation Officer so that we budgeted in the general fund and had the goal all along of having Ms. Mercer's salary and the School Performance Officer's in the general budget.

The restoration of ten teachers due to scheduling changes is a win win. We have a great schedule planned and we are going to restore some of those positions that we lost last year. The benefit is for the students. General budget monies have to be allocated for the transformation plan.

Mr. Coughlin: If the SIG grant does not come in at the amount we are anticipating, then we may not be in balanced budget at this level?

Mrs. Cylke: That's a possibility. We sent this to you in prior meetings. We have to get this to the Mayor. We have to reduce this by \$278,000 to be prudent. If the \$1.2M comes in because the Mayor's

revenue is higher than expected, there will be a little less concern. This is what's challenging about Rhode Island. You are forced by law by April 30th, you have to approve the budget and we still don't know what our revenue is and its mind boggling to me that we can operate this way. We are trying to be very conservative.

Mr. Spooner: The way I was looking at this and tell me if I'm wrong is we are looking at transformation at about \$3M. There are nine schools in the state of transformation that are going for this grant money totaling \$2.2M. If you break it up and divide it equally that gives everyone approximately \$250,000. That means we are at a wash again and we are teetering. It looks nice as Tom just presented it, but in reality, it's going to be a squeeze again. As the Chairman stated earlier, I don't want the papers to say we're running off saying "skippity do dah day."

Mrs. Cylke: Another member had inquired about the funding and my comment was I had never worked so hard for so little and I'm speaking on behalf of Mrs. DiCenso and the stakeholder group. The state has \$2.2M in SIG money to give to each school and there are nine schools. So even if they were to divide it evenly everyone would get \$245,000 a piece. I think Mrs. DiCenso and her team submitted a great plan. We have two schools not one and I'm hopeful that our grant will be significantly more. I received a call today from Andrea Casteneda and they don't have it ready yet, but they will soon.

Mr. Spooner: Weren't they supposed to have that done in five days?

Mrs. Cylke: Yes but to summarize what you just said is we have to be cautious and very prudent.

Mr. Tenreiro: It's a very important community discussion. We are in the beginning of a critical tipping point in Pawtucket where we've had a historic agreement of what we went through in transformation where you have unity. It's not in the paper anywhere because there's no huge conflict or problems. We have a united school department. I think we have a new central office, organization staff that is committed to student performance. A committee that is behind that and we are at a critical juncture right now and for money to be taken away from the school department to balance the municipal side will be brutal in terms of what we are trying to do in transforming the economic vitality of this community and transforming the graduation rate at our high schools and increasing student achievement across the board. This is an important budget and an important time especially to be talking about where we were and while we are cautious and to face the possibility of what we are faced with right now, but we have cooperated and we will continue to cooperate. We need to be committed to education in the short term for that long term vitality in our community.

Mr. Noonan: We still don't know when the SIG grant number will come in?

Mrs. Cylke: Based on the conversation it should be within the next couple of days.

I'd like to add this closing comment and piggyback on what Mr. Tenreiro said. There are the Mayors of these distressed cities like the Mayor of Pawtucket and I know in the Governor's plan, mayors will be given line items veto. I don't think that is legal that would be one

power. Not having monitors on the bus, eliminating school nurses and the perception is that mayors that are requesting this kind of relief feel that the schools are part of the problem and we've discussed that with the Mayor and I don't think that is his personal belief. But when you see these mayors want these powers to address the school department's budget, more so powers over their own budgets, it's a concern to me.

It's important to me that we as a governance team communicate clearly our expectations and our needs and I'm working with the Deputy to come up with a list of things that I feel are necessary and important. We are targeting our successes and there is no doubt that we will improve our graduation scores and opportunities for our kids. This is no time to be cutting back when we have faced the kind of year we had last year and we finally have a funding formula and that money is for us. The equity funding formula is for the students of Pawtucket. The \$2.8M in Education Jobs Monies that was meant to save jobs which we had to cut 13 last year. We need to be focused on ours. We will keep you informed. I think the Mayor has a tremendous challenge ahead of him. I'm all for being cooperative and collaborative but there is also a point where you have to be clear about what it is we need and what it is we need to get the job done.

Mr. Conlon: I think that's a very important point that this money is allowing us to catch up. I know it's easy to forget but in FY2010 and 2011 the state cut across the board education \$1.8M, which was the 3% when the Superintendent first got here. The very next year another \$2.7M for a total of \$6.8M across the board with no

replenishment. On top of that in the last four years, a total of \$12M was received from the federal government in the form of stabilization funds, federal jobs money and we got every penny of it. However, the state decreased aid by the same exact amounts. So the money that was intended by Washington to benefit the students of Pawtucket went into the state coffers. So all this is doing is putting back what we should have had to begin with. The funding formula is a seven year phase in anywhere from \$2M to \$2.5M a year. That means if it were fully implemented now, we would have \$14M more than we had funding formula.

Mrs. Cylke: Another important factor is this. Pawtucket's per pupil allocation is in the bottom four in the state. Our average per pupil allocation is \$13,000. The state average is \$15,000. The difference is \$2,000 per student. $\$2,000 \times 8000$ students is \$16M.

The other part that is frustrating is that about a year ago, we met with the department of revenue. They were there to help us deal with this deficit and at that meeting and it wasn't sarcastic I said I want to see if I understand this correctly. When I arrived, the state balanced its budget by reducing our budget but the money had already been spent. Then the state reduced Pawtucket by \$9M the excise tax fee for automobiles. So you've reduced our budget by \$10M and we are invited out to a meeting so you can help us come up with a plan to get out of this. We didn't get ourselves into this.

I think beyond our work as a committee and working with our city, we have to be focused on legislation that makes sense. Clearly this has not been an act of poor budgeting or over spending.

IV Adjournment

Mr. Spooner moved to adjourn the budget hearing. Mr. Coughlin seconded.

Voice vote carried all in favor.

The Chairman adjourned the budget hearing of the Pawtucket School Committee on Tuesday, April 10, 2012 at 6:54 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Clerk

APPROVED 5/15/12

Regular Meeting of the Pawtucket School Committee

Tuesday, April 10, 2012, 6:00 PM

**Jenks/JMW Complex for the Performing and Visual Arts Media Center
350 Division Street, Pawtucket, Rhode Island 02860**

Minutes

I Meeting will come to order

The Chairman called the meeting to order at 6:55 PM.

a. Roll call

Mr. Araujo-here; Ms. Bonollo-here; Mr. Coughlin-here; Mr. Noonan-here; Ms. Nordquist-here; Mr. Spooner-here; Mr. Tenreiro-here

Also in attendance were Mrs. Deborah Cylke, Superintendent of Schools; Ms. Patti DiCenso, Secondary School Performance Officer; Thomas Conlon, Business Administrator; Ms. Margaret Baker, Assistant Business Administrator and Mr. Stephen Robinson, Legal Counsel for the School Committee.

b. Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by the Chairman, Mr. Tenreiro.

II Recognition/Celebration

Mrs. Cylke: We'd like to recognize the Shea Guidance Department this evening; Mrs. Roberta King, Ms. Amy Kane, Mr. Richard Kucal, Jill Rihani, Matthew Bergeron and Cecilia Bernardo. The work that Roberta King led at Shea High School has been exemplary in terms of finding ways of where every student is, especially those students who left Shea High School. Not only does this system show a real commitment to those kids who are gone and caring about where they are, knowing that they have enrolled in school, but with their careful monitoring system that they have put in place the Shea High School graduation rate has jumped already from 59% to 67%. So when I say I'm confident that we'll get to that 75%, 80% mark, it's really due to the efforts of people like Roberta and the other counselors that work with her and the data team.

Ms. Di Censo: When this problem was brought to their attention at the building level, it was easy for them to complain that they didn't have the expertise to look into data to find out where the students were. They could have blamed, being an urban district that they weren't capable with their staffing to do it. Not once did this staff

ever give us an excuse. They rolled up their sleeves and unturned every stone and worked as a team. They went to classroom teachers, they went used FaceBook but most importantly, they really spent time learning the system. The state system and they have really increased their own skill level for the greater good of Pawtucket and the greater good of Shea and that's why we are going to be the transformation school that people are going to be talking about.

Mrs. King: Last year we were heartbroken at Shea. So we all got together with my staff and data team and did a lot of research and learned a lot of methods to find kids. We worked so hard and we learned how to work the state system and figure out where kids were. We're very confident going forward that is something that we'll own.

Mrs. Kane: I'm just proud to work for a woman who is so energetic and has the will to stick with something through all hours of the night. I couldn't be more pleased working for Robert King and Dr. Lord.

III Student Representatives

Charles E. Shea High School

Anton: I'd like to congratulate the guidance office. I hope I'm part of that 67%.

We have the masquerade ball coming up. That is sponsored by the freshmen class and it is being held at the Lefoyer Club. I believe you're supposed to wear masks and we have already sold about 50 tickets.

Liana: For the past month or two we had a contest give away called "Once upon a Prom" where one guy and one girl must nominate

themselves or be nominated and you get a free prom ticket, necessities for prom such as a limousine, discount on a dress, nails, hair, everything. So we have all our nominee letters and we are going to make our decision soon and I'm a part of that committee so I'm very excited to choose somebody from my school that deserves it.

Anton: On a more serious note we have our final portfolio reviews after vacation. I think Liana is ready. I have vacation, I have a week. Everyone is looking forward to that.

On a more exciting note we have a trip to Six Flags because we all passed our NECAPS.

Liana: As you were speaking during your budget hearing the Shea volleyball team was playing Tolman and I'm not sure who won that. We'll have to keep you posted on that. Also, baseball and softball have started recently as well as outdoor track and volleyball. Boys' tennis has also started and they play at Slater Park.

Anton: A few weeks ago we had Oscar night hosted by the two of us and we did an awesome job.

Mr. Araujo: I was there and you both did an awesome job.

Anton: Thank you very much. We have real world day coming up. This is for the business course and Ms. Cipriano takes the kids to Bryant University and you participate in a program that everyone has to pick a job that they give us options for living, housing food and everything and we have to try to make it work on the money we make on the job we pick. It's to really get a grasp on reality.

Liana: Friday at 12:00 PM me and the other Key Club members are going to be dismissed from school and take a bus to Springfield,

Massachusetts to attend a Key Club convention where various clubs from all over New England will talk about community service clubs and how we can make it a better world and also I'm no longer going to be president of the club. We are going to induct a new president into the club. It's a fun way to get to meet people from all over and I get to miss calculus class.

Also the fashion show is May 10th. I will be a part of it and I've been practicing in my heels, but I'll probably stumble a couple of times. I'm also a part of fashion show props where I help make the backdrops of the set for the fashion show. I also use that as a community service opportunity for the Key Club and the National Honor Society to help kids get involved and do stuff after school.

We also have Butterflies are Free sponsored by the Drama Club. It's about a blind guy who moves out on his own and it's going to be on May 18th.

May 9th is Pawsox day. Where each student who made the academic honor roll gets a free ticket to the Pawsox game and they are going to be recognized on the field and given a certificate for their hard work during the school year.

Anton: We have state testing coming up. It will be our last time to take it. We started taking it in our ninth grade year to check our progress to see how we have been learning each year in school.

I heard it's going to be great weather this week so pull out your shorts.

William E. Tolman High School

None

Jacqueline M. Walsh

None

IV Public Participation

Mr. Joseph Knight: One of the things that this body lacks right now is transparency. We had a meeting several weeks back where a member of the public was asked to report on something and another member of the public was denied a chance to respond. If you open up the floor to someone, you have to open up the floor to everyone for opinion. I think that this committee has done things or representatives of this committee have done things on behalf of the committee that they're not entitled to do. I think people should learn what Title 16 is and I think you need to be transparent in what you do. Thank you.

Mr. Ron Beaupre: Good evening. Thank you, Mr. Tenreiro, Members of the School Committee, Mrs. Cylke. I arise this evening in regards to item number four, letter c, the resolution regarding the layoff notification date that is currently being questioned at the state house. There is a bill that would move the notification date from March 1st to June 1st for all non renewals and terminations. At this point I understand that Tim Duffy, Executive Director of the Rhode Island Association of School Committees, has put together resolution and asked all school committees in the state to vote in favor of the resolution that would say to the members of the general assembly that you are in agreement with this bill. Now if you were talking strictly about layoff notification due to student population or reduction in funding, I wouldn't be standing before you, here. I can't

oppose that. If you tell me May 15th, then you have my support. When it comes to non renewals and terminations, however, under Title 16 of the Rhode Island General Laws one is afforded due process rights. Those due process rights allow for appropriate representation and allow for one to appeal the termination or non renewal. By moving the notification date from March 1st to June 1st you're limiting the time one has in that appeal prior to the closing of the school year. Leaving non renewals and terminations at March 1st allows for one who finds themselves in that situation enough time to make appropriate decisions for himself and to determine on which to appeal. By moving to June 1st those appeals are pushed back three months, four months maybe longer because this body doesn't meet in the summer unless there is a special occasion. I would urge at this point for this committee to table this and speak to Tim Duffy and the association and urge the legislature to separate the two. Leave the non renewals and terminations at March 1st and move all other layoffs to May 15th. Non renewals and terminations should be separate and apart from this and left at March 1st. So I ask leave politics out of this and let's think about the people that have due process rights. Allow them their due process rights and the time to pursue them. Thank you.

V Acceptance of previous meeting's minutes 3/13/12 and 3/20/12
Mr. Coughlin moved to accept and approve previous meeting's minutes of 3/13/12 and 3/20/12. Ms. Bonollo seconded.

Voice vote carried all in favor.

VI Informational Item

a. 3rd Quarter Financial Update

Mr. Conlon: As was mentioned earlier we started this year with a \$7.3M deficit. A huge part of that deficit was the reduction in state aid by \$2.8M. Last year we cut to the bone. There were about 18 teachers total, 13 were over scheduling changes. There were five clerical positions in the administration building alone that were cut. There was the furlough day and the teacher concessions which were huge. The availability of the literacy set aside monies. All those that brought that \$7.3M shortfall down to about \$2.3M with nothing else left to cut we relied on hesitantly, but we had no choice we felt, on both the unidentified cuts and the medical reserves. Both of which have been pretty consistent in the past.

The unidentified cuts have always ranged from anywhere from \$1.3M to \$1.5M. Unfortunately, this year they are lagging way behind. I'm ball parking they are going to be about half of where they were last year.

The medical reserves we anticipate will end up a little over \$700,000 for our use in reducing in the budget itself and that's where we planned to be. The budget went to the Mayor in the spring but on April 30th we ended up adjusting to actual in November. As of November those adjustments to actual still showed a balanced budget. Everything we anticipated was going to happen did happen. The teacher retirements came through. The concessions, the furlough day all of those things took place so that was fine. The first thing that showed anything amiss was in January. It takes a week easily to do this because you have to go line by line, salary by salary

and expenditure by expenditure. At the time though we saw that the unidentified cuts was at half of what they were about the same time the previous year and we weren't totally alarmed because the medical reserve was more than double what we needed. We thought that medical reserve excess would offset that shortfall in unidentified cuts still leaving us in a non deficit position.

From January 21st to March 14th the medical reserve average went up \$80,000 a week. It's generally \$200,000-\$250,000 a week. In those seven weeks after the January 21st projection they went up an average of \$80,000 a week. Instead of getting a \$250,000 a week bill for medical we got one for \$491,000, \$325,000 and \$450,000. Things, I will be the first to admit, that this committee warned us against using but we didn't think we had any choice. The bottom line is in January we believed the medical reserves had offset the unidentified cuts as of March that no longer became true because of those increases. Having said that, I have no idea what the bill will come in like next week. It may be back down to \$200,000. After this week I will begin another projection to see where we are. As of right this minute I'm being very conservative and saying it could be as high as \$1M based on the reliance of those to iffy items.

Mrs. Cylke: We need to be at \$2.3M. As we go through this 4th quarter we are going to monitor this more closely.

Mr. Coughlin: The unidentified cuts and medical reserves is basically an insurance problem actuary that will likely to exceed what we have budgeted. That being said, tomorrow morning if I get a telephone call from my friend the finance chairman on the city council that explodes

in my ear that we're projecting a possible \$1M deficit, the next question is probably going to be what do you plan on doing about it? My question is we have \$1M deficit in the coming weeks; do we have a game plan from recapturing the \$1M somewhere?

Mr. Conlon: When we met with the Mayor, the finance director and Tony Pires on Thursday we apprised them of this fact.

Mrs. Cylke: The City does the same thing. They balance their budget using unidentified cuts and what they call lag. I don't know where they are.

Mr. Conlon: I don't want to speak for them.

Mrs. Cylke: What we can do is not spend. That has been in place. Every purchase order has to be approved by me. We are not hiring. We put a freeze on.

Mr. Tenreiro: I think we could do it too officially as a motion now on non discretionary spending. The other answer is we somehow absorb it into next year's budget or we do a deficit reduction plan. If you remember in that salmon colored section last year those were some very difficult cuts that every municipality had to make and we had to bank on those unidentified cuts and medical reserves.

Mr. Noonan: Are we going to violate the law now that we are running in a deficit?

Mr. Robinson: I think the key is the cooperation between the district and the municipality. The auditor general will allow you to deficit if you have a plan that is agreed to by the party. Where you run into trouble is if you don't have a plan and you continue to spend and some districts have done this and that is problematic.

Mr. Tenreiro: This could potentially affect the FY13 budget also.

Mr. Coughlin moved to freeze all discretionary local expenditures.

Mr. Noonan seconded.

Mr. Coughlin withdrew his motion.

Mr. Coughlin: Mr. Conlon how confident are you that we can get this \$1M deficit down?

Mr. Conlon: I'd feel more comfortable after I do the next one by the middle of next week.

VII New Business—Action Items

a. Appointments-Coaching

Mrs. Cylke: This evening we are asking the school committee to approve the following appointments:

Girls head coach outdoor track at Shea—Katie Desrosiers, North Providence, RI

Girls assistant coach outdoor track at Shea—Pierre Ridorre, Warwick, RI

Mr. Noonan moved to approve Katie Desrosiers, North Providence, RI as the Girls head coach outdoor track at Shea and Pierre Ridorre, Warwick, RI as the Girls assistant coach outdoor track at Shea. Mr. Spooner seconded.

Voice vote carried all in favor.

b. Dr. Tim Ryan—School Committee Policies Review

Mrs. Cylke: At this time I'd like to ask Dr. Tim Ryan to come to the podium. As mentioned in the staff report this task that the committee has charged me with was to have a complete review of school committee policies and to backtrack a bit a number of years ago there

was a sub-committee that began this task and that sub-committee along with Vicki Bejma did quite a bit of work. That work was not completed. Very honestly, I am hesitant to have staff including myself involved in this process. These are your policies. I would never want the perception that I or my staff were trying to get in certain policies that maybe you would not be in agreement with. I think this is the best time to have an outside independent person with no ties to anybody to carefully review your policies. I've been asking around here in Rhode Island for a number of months and Tim's name came up repeatedly. Tim has been in Rhode Island for a long period of time and he is a highly respected school administrator, ex-superintendent and he is very familiar with Rhode Island statute as well as the BEP and the federal policies that impact schools. With your permission I would like to have you approve this work and between April and June it will be funded with a grant. I've provided your policies for Dr. Ryan and the revised suggested policies that the sub-committee had started and not completed and were never approved by you. I also gave him a copy of the 2011 Narragansett School Committee Policy because theirs are most current. I see Dr. Ryan coming to every meeting and begin chipping away and telling us you need to do this because you are out of compliance because of staffing issues or the BEP. He will start with the essentials first, then chapter one.

Dr. Ryan: Thank you very much, Mrs. Cylke and member of the committee. I started teaching in Rhode Island in 1972. I've taught at all levels and I've been a principal, superintendent and an

administrator in a number of districts and more recently have done some consulting and filling in. I'm actually working in North Providence right now doing their grants and overseeing their evaluation program.

Policy is one of these items that always is we can do it tomorrow. Somehow tomorrow becomes a year later and sometimes we have policies that are 30 or 40 years old. In some cases this isn't the end of the world. But as a principal when I had a serious discipline problem the first thing I'm going to do is open that policy book and say what are the offenses and what are the consequences for certain behaviors and what is the due process? So that policy book becomes an important guide in day to day practice. As a superintendent a policy may come up that may be a home school parent who wants to say gee, I want my daughter to run track or I'd like my son to play in the band. Do we have a policy for dealing with home school parents whose kids are still in our community? Do we have a way of dealing with this?

When we negotiate our contracts often school committees are in a tough spot because they are dealing with a contract and the back and forth but there are many things in state law that provide a lot of ammunition that strengthen school committees that you don't have to reinvent the wheel. Policies become more important on a day to day basis even though they may seem mundane and tedious. They simplify everyone's life. It's also critically important because it says a lot about how you look at the community; how you look at our kids and what kind of an administration and community do we want to

have in terms of what are our expectations for athletic performance and academic performance in order to compete. What are our expectations for our students to attend dances? Many school districts have breathalyzers. This is a policy in which the school committee develops in terms of their expectations and their understanding of the community and to the children to whom they oversee. Policies are very important. As a school committee you have critical functions under Title 16. You hire the Superintendent. You approve the budget and you set policy.

As the superintendent mention earlier I did look over what was provided to me and there is recognition that there are some policies that are needed because of state law and federal law. So it's really important that we have state and federal law and policy that are all in alignment.

There are also the existing policies that have just been collected and maybe not organized the way you might like. Some maybe procedures i.e. how long buses might idle and references to jobs principals accomplished in the sixties and really need to be updated. The Narragansett policy was done by a former Superintendent, Al Honnen, and he was my former assistant in Portsmouth. In my experience in Portsmouth, their approach was to set up a policy sub-committee that went through each section.

There are different ways to organize it. The Narragansett model looks at the broad organization of the school committee, administration, curriculum, students—those broad categories. The National School Board Association is another organization that uses letter patterns

just a different classification.

I recently did some consulting with the Providence schools and Dave Abbott who is an attorney, the Deputy Commissioner for the State of Rhode Island, has really urged districts to adopt some key policies that are aligned with the state. One thing Providence never had was they never adopted the Basic Education Plan. So I incorporated that in their policy and in that Basic Education Plan under the Rhode General Laws it notes the legal case of the Pawtucket School Committee vs. the Pawtucket Teachers Alliance in 1995 where you cannot bargain management rights. That becomes an important component of contract negotiations and how we follow state law.

Another thing I did in Providence would be for the school committee to develop a professional code of conduct. It sets a very detailed set of instructions for how a school department employee should behave. It's been put into state regulation. There are also professional standards for administration. This is just another step for the school committee to adopt these and put them into their policy book.

Ms. Nordquist: Dr. Ryan, I've been on the committee for eight years and the first time that we did the policy we had an attorney look at it and we voted on it and Mr. Tenreiro was on the committee at the time also but we didn't really go through it. We started a sub-committee a few years later which I was also on and went through every single policy and made so many suggested changes, but it never really saw the light of day because there was a dispute with the following school committee that came on. What is the role that you typically serve

with because this is a huge document to go through and present meeting by meeting and I feel that could take years. We spent nights, Joanne Bonollo and I served on that committee reviewing with the Deputy Superintendent for hours at a time. So how do you usually do it? What is the role you typically serve with this?

Dr. Ryan: When I started this process in Portsmouth, it was with the committee and I was a principal at the time and I was the administrator representative at the time and we met with the committee and we went piece by piece through it and decided what we liked and what we wanted to change and what the committee recommended. My recommendation in terms of the large task at hand is identifying several key policies that should be approved as quickly as possible. Then to look at sections of the policy book on administration and on the school committee and provide some general feedback and get some input and provide some drafts and bring it back for your perusal and ultimate approval. Your policy right now says your policy approvals have to be done in two consecutive meetings. My experience has been that school committees really appreciate the work. A lot of these policies were done thirty years ago and they are not necessarily bad, they just need to be updated. To answer your question identify some key ones and bring them back to you very quickly and to address different sections at a time.

Mr. Tenreiro: There are really two types of policies you are talking about. Your management policy where how long a bus idles and your high level management policy where you have your teacher reform policy. We really need to concentrate on those policies, but we need

to bring the others into compliance. I really don't want to get bogged down in the minutia of how long a bus is idling.

Ms. Nordquist: Do you think that you can get this done from April through June?

Dr. Ryan: No, not through this June.

Mrs. Cylke: The estimated cost of work from April through June is \$4,000. So through this year through June 30th we have grant money set aside so between now and then I will be looking for additional grant money to do the work. This is like painting the Golden Gate Bridge. When you're finished, you are often starting again. Whatever pleases the committee; I'm looking for your approval and relying on Dr. Ryan to advise you and would anticipate discussion on everything that comes before you.

Mr. Noonan moved to retain Dr. Tim Ryan to perform a review of the Pawtucket School Department School Committee Policy Book to ensure all policies are current, aligned with federal regulations, state statutes and the Basic Education Plan. **Mr. Spooner** seconded.

Ms. Bonollo: When you begin will you let us know how you will address it?

Dr. Ryan: I will come back at the next meeting with recommendations for several key policies that I will recommend for your consideration and develop a timeline for your consideration about how to approach it.

Mr. Araujo: Based on the laws and the BEP I think that's the most important part and we should chip away at that.

Mr. Coughlin: I'm seeing things like Providence's policy and the BEP

and right on the policy it says that RIDE Regulations carry force of the law so why does the school committee need a policy that is already a matter of law to begin with?

Dr. Ryan: I'm not an attorney but have been advised by RIDE and when a district adopts this, it does have the power of law. When it's in the policy book every aspect of what is in there (i.e., curriculum section; teacher evaluations,) there are so many different components the other parts of the policy book branch off from that.

Mr. Tenreiro: It was the same thing with the high school diploma policy and how the diploma decisions were going to be made. RIDE wanted the districts to put graduation regulations into policy.

Mr. Coughlin: Someone did a cut and paste on the Rhode Island General Law Title 16 and called it a policy manual and we've got this huge document and I'm wondering why you would start including policies that are already impinged on us by state law?

Mr. Robinson: I've had that discussion with Dave Abbott on more than one occasion. Their view is (i.e., if you have a code of conduct that the Regents have already adopted and we adopt it here as well,) why would you have to adopt it here when it's already been imposed by the state? They feel, and I think I would agree, disciplining an employee based upon that code and you had it here as your policy as well gives it greater strength and viability in a legal action.

Roll call

Mr. Araujo-yes; Ms. Bonollo-yes; Mr. Coughlin-yes; Mr. Noonan-yes; Ms. Nordquist-yes; Mr. Spooner-yes; Mr. Tenreiro-yes

Motion carried unanimously.

c. Resolution – Layoff date

Mr. Tenreiro: I introduced it and I thank Mr. Coughlin for getting it from RIASC. I've long been a supporter for moving the date to June 1st. I also understand what Mr. Beaupre said about terminations and non renewals. I just want that date to change whether it's May 1st, June 1st or whatever it is. If that type of adjustment to this resolution would make that happen at the state house I would be all for it. It's up to the committee. I would be willing to table it and work on language that brought in that idea of non terminations and renewals.

Ms. Nordquist moved to table the layoff notification date resolution that would change the layoff notification date from March 1st to June 1st. **Mr. Araujo** seconded.

Roll call

Mr. Araujo-yes; **Ms. Bonollo**-yes; **Mr. Coughlin**-no; **Mr. Noonan**-no; **Ms. Nordquist**-yes; **Mr. Spooner**-yes; **Mr. Tenreiro**-yes

Motion passed five in favor; two opposed.

d. Transformation Plan Endorsement/Acceptance of Grant Monies (Contingent upon Superintendent notification from RIDE of plan approval)

Mrs. Cylke: This evening I had put this on the agenda with hope that we would have received from the Commissioner Gist approval of our transformation plan along with our award of the grant. We do not have that. I will need to move this item to a future meeting. I spoke to **Mr. Tenreiro** about having a special meeting on April 24th. At this point and time I do not have an approved plan from the commissioner.

e. 2012-2013 School Calendar

Mrs. Cylke: This item I'm also asking that we withdraw from the agenda. The school calendar has not been approved by the appropriate groups. Ms. Mercer is working on this. We look forward to bringing this to you shortly. It's not a complex or controversial issue but we need to have our union leaders together for final review.

VIII Superintendent's Report

Mrs. Cylke: I was invited to attend the RI Philharmonic event that was sponsored by Hasbro and attended by hundreds and hundreds of Pawtucket kids. This is a wonderful grant that sends hundreds of Pawtucket kids to the philharmonic and this was the first year of what they called an engaging interactive concert. The teachers had been given in advance lesson plans and the students had recorders and songs to sing and they could actually get to play with the philharmonic. They did an amazing job. They had to learn several songs, one in Spanish. It was a huge success and the folks from Hasbro were there. They were fourth graders, they were well behaved, and they were super enthusiastic. I was so proud this morning. I will be attending a breakfast put on by the philharmonic to recognize Hasbro. They not only do this for us, but they also provide a lot of private music lessons for our students who are more advanced and other opportunities for students to engage.

The other thing I wanted to update you on is we have been working very closely with SMMA. That's the architectural firm that we hired to do Stage II of our facilities plan. We got a bit of a curve ball this week, but I think we can work through it. They identified \$11M in

health and safety issues in the fifteen Pawtucket schools including the ALP center in the Administration Building. To be very honest, I thought it was going to be more. That's less than \$1M per school. Stage I health and safety was submitted to RIDE. We did that with the hopes of the Regent approving this in May. What has happened since is other school districts knowing that RIDE has a moratorium on renovations of schools and a moratorium on building new schools and knowing that RIDE and the Board of Regents are looking at health and safety, you can imagine 37 school districts working hard towards working on health and safety with the hope that that will be funded. Joe DaSilva told us just days ago is that we need your entire long range plan because the Regents are complaining that without a long range plan how can they approve a long range plan on the health and safety issue when in fact the money you are putting money into in your short range plan you are going to sell in your long range plan? So we met with the architects this morning and we have a solution to move forward and meet all of RIDE's expectations. I think we should bring SMMA in at our next meeting so we can have a full report with them and you can ask questions.

We don't have a plan to close schools or build new schools. You can't build new schools because they are not going to be funded. If you can't build a new school, you can't close an old one because how are you going to close an old one? What are you doing to do with the kids when you close that school? For the next 60 months we are looking at using the schools we have and making sure that they are safe and healthy environments for our students and all of our

employees. But looking ahead into this plan in 2014 we want to go before the voters with a proposal to significantly deal with capacity issues and perhaps retiring certain schools if that's what the architects tell us we think we should. I think it has to be based on their recommendations. The good news is we are moving along. We just haven't heard back from RIDE yet as to the issues they are going to accept. Typical issues are it's a new heating system, a new boiler, a new fire alarm system that needs to be updated because we can't get parts. Its water fountains not working, its bathrooms not working. We will provide that thorough report at our next meeting.

Our high school principal selection process; we finished the paper process and today we had interviews. Once we vet the finalists and check references I will publicly announcing who those finalists are. One thing I've added to the process is a site visit. We will be visiting with the finalist their places of employment. This needs to be the right decision for the right person at these two schools at this time. I know Ms. DiPrete spent eight hours today, thank you for your service on the committee. We are eager to get these folks before you for your final approval.

A week and a half ago Mr. Conlon and the city finance sub-committee met. As you know next fall on the ballot they are getting those questions ready. In the past the school department has always had on that ballot a question to approve \$3M for maintenance and facilities. We went before the finance sub-committee and I let them know that we are going through this long range facility planning process and we don't have \$3M worth of work to do. We have \$11M

worth of work to do. But it was premature for me to put in a formal request because that has to be approved by you. Which is why that is another reason why I would like to see that extra meeting in April. Then the question becomes what do you want to put on the ballot or what do we formally ask the finance committee to accept? I've talked to a couple of superintendents throughout the nation who are very experienced with passing bonds and they have said the danger is by asking for what you need; \$11M because you could walk away with nothing. You could be safe and get the \$3M if people go the way they have in the past. But then you know you are \$5M short. So what do you do? The other approach is to possibly split the question and I'd like to bring a bond consultant before you and try that strategy. Where the first is for \$3M and the second is for \$5M and decide what is going to get done if A gets approved over B. So first I'm trying to find out if that is possible in Rhode Island. We wanted to let the finance committee know that the \$3M is in the past certainly and we had a need for more and I would go back to them.

Ms. Bonollo: Would it be possible to invite them when SMMA comes so they can hear what we are looking at?

Mrs. Cylke: I would definitely want Lance Hill. He is the new facilities director for the city. I think he already understands we have a lot of work to do. We have to be smart about this and understand where the city is. Here's the deal, 76 – 80 % of this is reimbursable. This is a Rhode Island wow. You get the city taxpayers to pass a bond and the state reimburses you 76-80%. Right now only health and safety are reimbursable.

I wanted to let you know that the supervision plan for the most part is well covered. Kathleen is working at a few schools where we have a shortage of volunteers but we will come back to you with a formal update. Overall, we have had a positive response.

IX Special Reports of the School Committee Members

Mr. Araujo: Thank you everyone for coming and have a good night.

Ms. Bonollo: Have a good night.

Mr. Coughlin: Ditto Mr. Araujo.

Mr. Noonan: Have a good night. Hope you all had a good Easter and thank you for coming.

Ms. Nordquist: Have a good night.

Mr. Spooner: Good evening everyone.

Mr. Tenreiro: You can always ask for \$11,000,000.99. That always works. Thanks everyone for coming.

X Adjournment

Mr. Spooner moved to adjourn. **Ms. Bonollo** seconded.

Voice vote carried all in favor.

The Chairperson adjourned the regular meeting of the Pawtucket School Committee on Tuesday, April 10, 2012 at 8:05 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Clerk

APPROVED 5/15/12